1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

JOINT PROPERTY

Roussel (190, p. 428) says that the fields were planted and the crops harvested in common by the members of a household or by the people living at the same place [lineage]. The workers were rewarded with a feast (*hatu*), the size of which depended upon the extent of the land and the importance of the owner. The dimensions given by early voyagers for the dwelling houses suggest that several biological families, probably closely related, lived together.

Near the foundations of ancient houses are generally found chicken houses of stone in which the fowls were kept during the night. It is impossible to determine now what system of property was applied as regards poultry. Hens undoubtedly had a great value and were used for exchange. Today fowls are personal property and every man identifies his hens by an ownership mark cut on the legs. I was unable to discover whether ownership marks were used in ancient times or adopted under Chilian influence.

Today everyone gives freely of his clothes and of cooking and tilling implements. Between relatives there is a constant exchange of gifts conforming to patterns of reciprocity. Children are permitted to use anything they need from the houses of either their paternal or maternal relatives. During his first stay on the island, Eyraud was obliged by the natives to build a boat. They gathered wood from all over the island and everyone participated in the construction of the truly "national boat."

The few boats on Easter Island are joint property of all those who have contributed to their building, either in work or in furnishing wood. One such boat belongs to seven men, and each must give his permission before the boat can be used. The joint owners of a boat fish together and divide their catch among their own families. If the canoe belongs to a single person, those who help him fish receive the least desirable fish, and the owner keeps the tuna fish.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

THIEVERY

The thievery of Easter Islanders has been stressed by all visitors and their dishonesty has become as famous as their statues. Even when the Europeans avenged the small thefts by slaughtering the unarmed natives, the islanders continued to steal. They used the charms of their women to distract the seamen while they robbed them of their hats or handkerchiefs.

The thievery of the natives is not merely the result of uncontrolled desire for many new and astonishing things. Their dishonesty appears innate and systematic; they enjoy stealing the fruits they have given to their visitors as much as the theft of cloth or European articles. Their bartering with the white men is absolutely unscrupulous; they filled with stones the baskets

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Koro

574 The feast for honoring a living father, mother, father-in-law, or mother-
431 in-law is called *koro*; it has survived until very recent times. I was told
554 that the *koro* is still celebrated but I believe that the traditional *koro* has been displaced by a more familiar feast, also called *koro*. The *paina* and *koro* are very similar; some sources maintain that they are identical, differing only in the fact that the first was intended for a dead parent and the second for a living parent. But, since modern informants may have attributed to the *paina* some of the features of the more familiar *koro*, reservations must be made.

My principal informant, Juan Tepano, believed that the last *koro* was celebrated about 1886. But Victoria Rapahango, 36 years old, described to me the *koro* of her brother, at which she assisted when she was a young girl. The word *koro* means "feast" and I suppose that Tepano had in mind the old pageant festivities when he spoke about the disappearance of the *koro*. But *koro* also means "father" and is employed as a reverential term when speaking to an older man (*e koro e*).

574 A man celebrating a *koro* for his father presented himself on a fixed day
431 before his relatives and friends with 200 or 300 fowls tied in groups of 10
602 to a long rope. He handed a fowl to his father. The father received it and
554 picked out other fowls which he gave to each of his brothers, sisters, or cousins, both male and female. Sometimes the father presented fowls to some of his good friends. After this first distribution the father bestowed the remaining fowls upon his most beloved brother who was called the *motuha* and who ritually carried the fowls on his shoulders. This brother did not keep the birds, but presented them to his wife who passed them on to her brother. The brother gave them to his wife, and she in turn gave them to her brother and he to his brother-in-law. If brothers were lacking, the fowls were given to a sister or to a cousin, male or female on either the mother's or the father's side. If the wife of the *motuha* had no brother or cousin, she gave the fowls to her father or mother. The fowls were eaten when they had been given away five times. Then everyone wanted to have them and shouted, "ma aku, ma aku!" (for me, for me!). The man who gave a great *koro* was honored with the title of *tangata honui* (great man, generous). My informants and Roussel (190, p. 428) stress the fact that the man honored in a *koro* did not keep the food he received for himself or at least very little of it.

A return gift of fowls was made to the host of the *koro* on a later occasion through the same series of presentation. If the wife of the brother of the wife of the *motuha* received fowls from her son, the man who made the first *koro* would eventually get them. The following definite examples, given to me by informants, illustrate the preceding statements:

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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Years ago, the father of Victoria made two *koro*, one in behalf of the father-in-law and the other in behalf of the mother-in-law of his son, Miguel Rapahango. He wanted to make his son "big" (*haka honui tana poki*). The brothers and closest relatives and his other sons and daughters each contributed fowls or some kind of food. All these presents were to be returned some day. The fowls given by the brothers were delivered to the brothers and cousins of Miguel's father-in-law, Emilio Paoa, who received the *koro*. The other fowls were given to Emilio who bestowed them upon his brother (*motuha*).

The feast was celebrated in the house of Victoria's father and there were more than 250 fowls bound to two ropes. In the same place there was a big earth oven or food gift (*umu porohaoga*). The *motuha*, on the same day, made another earth oven in his house and brought the food to the house of Victoria's father. The food gift of the *motuha* was called *umu motuha*. He gave the food to Miguel Rapahango, who presented it to his own father. The food taken out of the earth oven of the *koro* giver was delivered to the father-in-law and to the people who helped.

Victoria remembered quite well that Miguel's wife untied one fowl and gave it to her father, Emilio Paoa, who took the other fowls presented by the brothers and sisters of his son-in-law and distributed them among his relatives of the Paoa family. The other fowls, with the exception of 20, he delivered to his brother. The brother distributed the fowls among his family and friends because he had no wife or other brothers. Emilio Paoa gave some fowls to his *tunu*, who is a neighbor, a man of a tribe living close by.

If the *koro* was celebrated for a mother-in-law, she gave the fowls to her brother, he to his wife, the wife to her brother, and so on. During the feast the people sang this song:

I o te korongo mai nei	Here is the feast sung
I Moana-vera-vera-ra-tahai	In Moana-vera-vera-ra-tahai (name of a place)
Rima turu, turu.	Hands raising, raising.

I asked Tepano to imagine that Beatriz, who was the wife of his son Jorge, made a *koro* for him. Tepano said he would give the fowls to his brother, Pakomio. Pakomio would present them to his wife and she to her brother. A cousin of Pakomio's wife could make a *koro* and the presents would come back in the same way. Sometimes a brother of the father-in-law of the *motuha* might give fowls to his brother, who in turn gave them to his wife; she delivered them to her daughter, the *motuha's* wife. The *motuha*, Tepano's uncle, would give the fowls back to Tepano.

As a rule one never made a *koro* for his brother or his cousins, but if one were an orphan he sometimes celebrated a *koro* for an elder brother. The present made in a *koro* was called *mee ravaa* (?) or *mahia*. A *koro* could be celebrated in honor of a dead father (*koro puoko mata*, feast of the dead skull of the father). The paternal uncle received it for the dead. The son who offered such a *koro* was assisted by his brothers, his cousins, and his friends.

There were no *koro* in winter because the earth ovens of the *koro* are "finished" (*umu koro huri*). The man who presented a *koro* during the month of July made a special earth oven which was called *umu anakena*. In it he cooked some fowls which he gave to the *motuha*. Tepano informed me once that the *motuha* could keep 5 or 10 fowls. They were called *haokuku*. The *motuha* brought to the feast from 20 to 50 fowls which he delivered to his

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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574 brother who in his turn gave them to his son. Sometimes they were given to
431 the wife of the man who made the *koro*; she passed them on to her brother or her father.

602 I was told that the son could give 5 or 10 fowls to his father on the
554 occasion of the *umu anakena*. The father distributed them among people who had helped him when he was hungry (in time of famine for instance). This present was called *moa haka kio* (to reward with fowls; literally, "fowls made prisoners").

During the feast of the *koro* the father or the mother praised the generosity of the son:

[539] E poki koro nui e mooku mo te matua e (e nau e)
Son of feast great for me for the father (for the mother)

If he had already made a *koro* for one of the parents the formula would be a little different:

[539] E poki koro nui mo maua ko nua o
Son of feast great for me and for your mother

431 The *koro* is closely related to a custom which is now prevalent in Easter
602 Island and which obliges the men to make presents to the brothers or the cousins of their wives. Generally it is only one brother or one cousin who receives these presents. I was told by all my informants that "the brother-in-law who is chosen is the best-liked one, and sometimes the others become jealous." A husband must also make presents to the sister of his wife. Every one who receives a present must make a return gift on a later occasion, and if he has self respect he will give more than he has received. The *mahia* or present to a brother-in-law or a cousin cannot be something made by one's self; it must be a gift obtained from a parent or a friend. As Tepano told me, "The one who gives you fowls, he only is your brother, only the fowls have value." That is, the symbolism of the gift stresses a close personal relationship between the giver and the cousin chosen as recipient. The *mahia* may also be a circulating present which passes through many hands according to the old *koro* system.

KORO HOUSE

345 In connection with the *koro* is always mentioned a big house, also called *koro*, where young people spent their time playing various games. This house was the material symbol of the generosity of the *koro* giver. Tradition has preserved descriptions of *koro* houses which were several hundred feet long and more than 20 feet high. Materials for the construction of the house were often provided by relatives or friends who aided the giver of the *koro* in his expenditures. Tepano said that *koro* houses were intended for young

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
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up to the parents, though Jorge mentioned that other relatives might be consulted at this time. However, such consultation cannot be long extended, for consent — or rejection — is given very shortly. If accepted, the father of the boy immediately pours some drinks and both families and their relatives are sent for and a party is given that very day.

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MARRIAGE

When a couple is about to marry, the father of the bridegroom designates one of his brothers to collect presents from the family. Those who are supposed to give at this time are the father's brothers and sisters, cousins, *compadres*, and certain individuals related by marriage.[3] Of considerable interest is the fact that the male members of the father's *tumu*, or — to use the islander's present Spanish term — *aliados*, must give presents at this time.[4] Although the *tumu* no longer operates to the extent that marriage must be within the *tumu*, though such is looked upon with high favor, its continued existence is clearly recognized in that not only do its members give marriage gift-exchange presents to any one of their members whose son or daughter is being married, but they are automatically invited to any feasts given by any member of the *tumu*.

583 602 613 [582]

The gifts collected at this time, which may consist of foodstuffs, cows, pigs, cloth, or money, are turned over to the bridegroom's father who then invites the bride's father and her extended family to a feast, and they come bringing guitars for singing and dancing. After the feast the bridegroom's father presents to the bride's father the accumulated gifts his brother has collected. At such a time the gifts may often be spread out in the form of a boat.

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Some time after the bride's father has received his gifts, one of his brothers or sisters is designated to collect gifts from the bride's family which are then turned over to the bride's father. It is now his turn to invite the bridegroom's father and extended family to his home for a feast, after which the collected gifts are presented to the bridegroom's father. In all of this, the engaged couple receive nothing, for, as Jorge pointed out, when they get married they will have each other and that is sufficient.

Although common law marriages unaccompanied by ceremony still exist, the

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3 I was unable to determine precisely which relatives by marriage must present gifts, in that I found out too late that Easter Islanders use the Spanish word *cuñado*, or brother-in-law, loosely to include husbands of cousins and even nieces, not all of whom are required to give presents.

4 A *tumu* is a group of lineages into which, in former times, a man might marry. The *tumu* to which the Tepano family belongs, for example, consists of the Tepano, Pakomio, and Pate lineages. [582]

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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ments and works of art. His idea was that since I had books and photographs showing the designs and he had the manual skill we might form an ideal, not to say a profitable, partnership. I must confess that on several occasions the islanders' skillful imitations completely deceived me, and I thus acquired a beautiful collection of ancient stone hooks that I only gradually realized were modern copies.

This continued practice of the traditional arts has a certain historical bearing. It suggests that there has never been a complete breach in Easter Island civilization and that the present natives, however mixed in blood they may be, are, nevertheless, the successors in direct line of the unknown men who carved the old wooden images that are nowadays prized specimens in our museums.

Unfortunately, this is not the only old custom which has survived. From the time when the Dutch discovered the island to the present, its people have had the reputation of being the cleverest thieves in the South Seas, and quite rightly. This complaint is repeated in all the accounts of the early navigators, and many of the dramatic incidents on the beach of Hangaroa have arisen from the natives' brazen contempt for the sanctity of private property. Only the sensitive and elegant French explorer La Pérouse adopted the policy of laughing at such pilfering, and paid no further attention to it. He and his men were amused by the attitude of the native women who helped their mates pick pockets by distracting the attention of innocent victims through entreaties and "ludicrous gestures."

The natives of our day are just as thievish as their forefathers, and this wayward disposition is the cause of endless troubles for the English company which has leased the island from the Chilean Government for sheep raising. To prevent constant stealing of the sheep the company put barbed wire across the island in an attempt to force the people to remain within the bounds of their village. But such drastic measures were of little avail, and in the year I spent there 3,000 sheep disappeared. Though the culprits are known to the whole community, family loyalty protects them and makes investigation useless.

Otherwise the natives are law-abiding and peaceful; there are very few records of murder or bloody violence among them. The only criminal we heard of was one of our guides, who, ironically enough, proved to be about the only honest man on the island.

The people live as they did in the past, on the produce of their fields. Taros, sweetpotatoes, yams, bananas, and sugarcane grow abundantly on the fertile volcanic soil. The only wants they cannot supply themselves are for manufactured goods such as soap. And they like especially to get foreign clothing. In this matter, the men

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

115 the projecting noses, excavated on the south-eastern slope of Rarakú (fig. 73) and, when she wanted water, rather than cross the boundary and go round to the lake by the gap, through the hostile dwellers on the western side, she used to clamber with her vessel up the boundary rift in the cliff face. There was one [586] white child, who died young, but her marriage was not a success, and Viriamo left the man and went off to live with one of the Miru clan at Anakena. His house already contained a wife and family, also four brothers, but they all got on quite happily to- [592] gether. She had five children by this man, who, like their father, 595 were all white; four of them, however, died in infancy. This was the result of the parents having most unfortunately fallen foul [754] of an old man, whose cloak had been taken without his consent, and who had accordingly prophesied disaster. The remaining child, a daughter, was living and unmarried when we were on the island. The last husband was the most satisfactory of the three; he was a Tupahotu living near Tongariki. She was handed over to him as a matter of family arrangement, in discharge of a debt, but she was quite amenable to the exchange, and was very fond of him. He was light in colour, but her only child by this marriage, our friend Juan, was dark, taking, as he said, "after my mam-ma."

593 The women do not seem, judging by existing remains, to have had always a happy time. Dr. Keith, who examined the skulls collected by the Expedition, concludes his report on one of the female specimens as follows: "The most likely explanation is that the indent of the left temple was the cause of death, produced by the blow of a club, and that the suppuration and repair of the right side has been also produced by a former blow which failed to prove fatal. Two other skulls, also those of women, show indented fractures in the left temporal region."

764 Any deficiency at marriages, in the way of social festivity, was made up at funerals. These were attended by persons from [602] all over the island, for "when they were not fighting, they were all cousins." In answer to the remark that "considering the population their whole time must have gone in this way," it was cheerfully observed that "they had nothing else to do, so they all went, everybody took food and everybody ate." The parents of one of our friends, Kapiera, lived at Anakena, but he was born on the south side of the island near Vaihu "when his